

Hunter 161

Chapter 161: Towards the Horizon

Jake awoke from meditation and stood up, stretching a bit. It didn't really do anything as the system had thoroughly changed his physique, and he wasn't even sure how things like muscles mattered anymore, but he still felt better after doing it.

He looked towards his target in the distance and saw that the Storm Elemental had confidently moved closer to the giant tree to soak in its mana. Jake had clearly ruined the natural balance that the Thunder Roc and Storm Elemental had created by killing one of them...

So wouldn't it only be fair to finish off both?

His tactic for the Storm Elemental would be far different, however. Instead of just fighting it straight-up, he would challenge himself another way...

Jake had always been pretty decent at long-distance shooting, and he had to admit that he always admired the Longbowmen. Jake remembered that the longest range ever achieved with a longbow was a bit less than 350 meters, and that wasn't even with any focus on accuracy.

He once read that using a longbow was more similar to golf than any actual archery. Jake wasn't sure how accurate that was.

With what Jake planned, he knew that his usual attacking tactic wouldn't work.

Even at around a dozen kilometers, there was practically no drop-off for his arrows due to the sheer power behind them -- the Windsoar bow's enchantment that helped with air resistance also being immensely helpful.

But Infused Powershot was what really made it possible. The problem was that... the mana within the shot would run out before hitting. It would slowly fizzle out, making the arrow slow down and begin dropping far more than before.

Jake didn't know the exact maximum range of Infused Powershot, but he didn't believe he could keep his arrow flying in a straight line for more than 20-25 kilometers, if even that.

So to shoot a Storm Elemental from where he currently stood would be... difficult.

He focused his eyesight and could barely see the humongous figure of the Storm Elemental far, far off in the distance. When he focused, it was like he was looked through a telescope; well, except it didn't limit his peripheral vision at all.

That 1978 perception is about to be put to good use, Jake snickered inwards as he began to make some quick calculations.

So, based on my calculations, if I shoot up and the arrow goes whoosh and then it goes wee, hitting the elemental with a boom, it will do big damage, Jake nodded, approving of his own brilliance.

In all seriousness... this kind of attack was where he did a bit of calculation, but otherwise, he just did what felt right.

When it came to pure archery, this would, without a doubt, be his biggest challenge yet, which is why he was still excited for it. It wasn't as much a life and death battle as it was Jake overcoming his own limits.

Gazing towards his target one more time, he saw that it indeed hadn't moved for ten minutes or so, just standing right at the tree, one of its massive arms placed on the trunk. He estimated the distance between him and the Storm Elemental to be...

175-177 kilometers.

His last Infused Powershot at full power passed around 15 kilometers in 3 seconds. That meant even if he could shoot with that much speed, it would take the arrow 35 seconds or so from shooting it till it arrived.

But he wasn't shooting in a straight line but a curve. It would also travel significantly slower for a lot of the journey... meaning he effectively looked at more than a minute of travel time.

It was about the same time it would take him to summon another Arrow of the Ambitious Hunter.

Did he need to be that far away? Probably not.

Was he confident in hitting from that range? Not really.

Would he do it anyway? Hell yeah.

Jake had already decided that he wanted to accomplish a few things before reaching D-grade. For his class, he had wanted to beat a D-grade in one-on-one combat without any gimmicks. But he also wanted to explore exactly how far his current skills in pure archery could take him. And what was more critical to archery than precision?

He began summoning his Arrow of the Ambitious Hunter as he focused on the Storm Elemental. What appeared was an arrow similar to the one he had used on the Cloud Elemental, and once more, it had also drained far more mana than stamina to make. He was fully aware that he could only shoot a few shots before running out of either stamina or mana... but he had a feeling it would be okay.

While he wasn't sure exactly how the elemental's resources worked, he had a strong feeling that it wouldn't be able to regenerate itself faster than he could pump out arrows. Especially not as he was more than liberal with consuming potions.

With his Venomfang, he made a deep cut on his own wrist as he focused on Blood of the Malefic Viper. He soaked the entire arrow in the blood, as he knew it was his most effective toxin against the non-biological elemental.

Nocking the giant arrow, he took a final look at the target so far off in the distance it wouldn't even register in a regular human's eyes. Yet Jake could see his target quite clearly, the streams of thunder rumbling within releasing the occasional flash of light.

Almost like it was begging for an arrow from half a small country away.

Drawing the string, he felt the resistance. He still found it very magical how the bow could keep feeling taut despite his increasing stats. He knew it was due to its quality as he was pretty sure a common-rarity bow from the tutorial would break in his hands.

He began charging all his boosting skills, and even Big Game Hunter awakened to his intent, boosting his strength and agility even further. Limit Break activated at 20% as he knew he would handle the weakness while recovering his resources anyway.

Mark of the Ambitious Hunter also proved once more how little Jake understood it. He used the Mark on the Storm Elemental even though it was so far away, and to his amazement, he could even feel where the elemental was from it.

He thought it would be out of range... but then again, the skill's range did scale with perception.

With everything ready, he began charging Infused Powershot. Power whirled around him as he did the last-second calculations and got a feel for the perfect angle. He took a deep breath as he began reaching his limits.

Jake let go of the string, and the arrow exploded out as it flew in an arc out into the distance.

One would think it was a danger that it would encounter other flying creatures during its flight, but the risk was actually quite low. Most of the birds tended to stay lower as they hunted the cloud elementals on the continent below. A few did note the shadow of the arrow passing over them, but as it wasn't an attack aimed for them, they ignored it.

Jake had already begun creating another Arrow of the Ambitious Hunter. With his eyes closed as he focused, he didn't even look if the arrow would hit its target.

He would know if it did... and if it didn't, he would just have to try again.

The seconds ticked by as he channeled summoning the arrow. It slowly began emerging from his palm, suspended above it by the skill.

10...11...13

34... 35...

59... a minute passed, and nothing yet.

63... 64...

He felt the arrow about to be fully summoned as he opened his eyes. The first thing he did was to throw his gaze towards the Storm Elemental... and just in time.

From above, a giant arrow fell. It looked only like a small needle as it impacted the massive Storm Elemental that had just been minding its own business at the lightning tree.

Destructive energy invaded the elemental as Jake felt it through his Mark. Like a wave, it tore through the massive form, and Jake was certain that it was making loud booming noises based on the many small forms of panicking birds and elementals he saw.

But... Jake didn't have time to look. He once more drenched the now-finished arrow in his blood as he nocked it and once more began charging Infused Powershot.

BOOM!

Once more, the cloud island he was on shook, and he felt a lot of it be blown apart... he would have to find another one soon as this one would disperse entirely in only a few shots.

Another Arrow of the Ambitious Hunter flying in a great arc towards the horizon as he consumed a mana potion and began making yet another.

A bit more than a minute later it landed, this one missing the massive elemental by nearly 100 meters. It sounded like a lot, but with the gigantic shooting distance, it really wasn't. The Storm Elemental had moved slightly in the direction he had shot from, but after finding nothing, it was already making its way back again to the tree.

So he shot again.

BOOM!

This one flew in another great arc, tearing through the sky. The wind gave way as the Windsoar enchantment that gave his bow its name truly proved its worth. With wind resistance non-existent, his arrow didn't lose much momentum as it flew; the only thing working to slow it down was the energy from the Infused Powershot running out.

Perhaps there was something poetically ironic about using a bow blessed by elementals to get revenge on someone slaying elementals... to slaughter even more elementals. Cloud and wind were even closely related...

The third arrow descended like a great artillery strike, hitting true as once more the massive Storm Elemental was invaded with destruction incarnate. It writhed in pain as it tried to locate its attacker but failed.

Its intelligence was non-existent like the Cloud Elementals. It moved only on instincts and refused to leave the giant lighting tree... it was just a sitting duck, never going more than a few kilometers away from it. Well, Jake would call its instincts pathetic, but he wasn't the best to ask.

BOOM!

A fourth arrow was released, and this one also flew true. The cloud island below him couldn't take a single shot more before being completely dispersed... but he only had mana for a single arrow more, so that was fine.

Ten thousand mana, uplifted to nearly fifteen thousand with the potion, was consumed with five arrows. Jake's stamina was also down to a third, the constant strain of Limit Break at 20% and, of course, the investment in the arrows. This meant that each summoning had drained nearly 3000 mana and more than 750 stamina.

A few remnants of the massive roars of the Storm Elemental even made their way towards him, barely audible in the distance. He couldn't help but chuckle, thinking of the beasts below the island and the birds flying on it, all scared absolutely shitless.

BOOM!

The fifth and final arrow was released, the cloud island below him now wholly blown apart. He quickly made his way to another nearby small island as he settled down on it. He deactivated Limit Break as he began breathing heavily from the exhaustion.

He had just entered meditation as he felt the fifth arrow hit.

56 minutes later, he opened his eyes and consumed a mana potion, and then reentered meditation immediately again.

An hour after that, he chugged down a stamina potion before continuing his meditation.

This continued for 6 hours total – 3 stamina and 3 mana potions – before he opened his eyes for another shooting session.

He gazed towards the distance and saw his target still at the lightning tree. It was less damaged than six hours ago... but far from healed. All signs of toxicity from his blood were long gone, but it didn't have enough time to regenerate fully.

Its internal thunder was slightly muted... and as the saying goes, one must smith when the iron is hot.

2 minutes and 49 seconds later...

BOOM!

Another arrow rained down on the poor Storm Elemental. It wasn't smart enough to understand how screwed it was, but even with its primitive instincts, it had been happy to be left alone for the last half a dozen hours.

BOOM!

Then a seventh came, tearing away at it even more. Its massive right arm seemed to lose its form for a moment before the elemental reformed it.

BOOM!

The eighth arrow hit it in its mid-section, and a massive portion of its body was consumed for a moment, with the Storm Elemental once more expending considerable resources to heal itself.

BOOM!

Arrow number nine missed by less than five meters to the right of the massive stationary form. Can't be perfect every time, Jake chuckled, already preparing the tenth arrow.

BOOM!

The tenth hit, meaning eight total hits by Arrow of the Ambitious Hunter. The Elemental truly looked to be spent, so Jake did the only natural thing.

He went through another round of recuperation on yet another small cloud island.

A bit over twelve hours after the first arrow arrived, the barrage continued.

BOOM!

The eleventh arrow blew apart the right arm once more, but this time it didn't regenerate it right away.

BOOM!

The twelfth arrow blew apart the other massive arm, one it also failed to regenerate.

BOOM!

The thirteenth arrow hit it right in the chest-section, blowing out a massive part of its body. The destructive wave tore through it, as the lighting that ran through it was practically non-existent now. It tried to regenerate the destroyed part of its chest, but it appeared to have difficulty maintaining its form.

BOOM!

Fourteen. Twelve of which that hit. That was how many Arrows of the Ambitious Hunter were required to kill the D-grade elemental.

You have slain [Storm Elemental – lvl 107] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level

'DING!' Class: [Ambitious Hunter] has reached level 94 - Stat points allocated, +4 free points

'DING!' Class: [Ambitious Hunter] has reached level 95 - Stat points allocated, +4 free points

'DING!' Race: [Human (E)] has reached level 83 - Stat points allocated, +5 free points

Jake basked in the levels but noticed there was one notification he had missed. It came the moment he killed the Elemental and was honestly one he hadn't expected.

Skill Upgraded: [Expert Archery (Uncommon)] --> [Archery of Vast Horizons (Rare)]